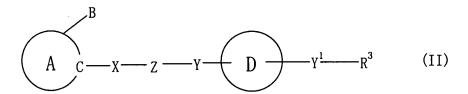
Amendments to the Claims

1-8. (Cancelled)

9. (Currently amended) A compound represented by the formula



wherein

ring A is a 5-membered aromatic heterocycle containing 2 or more nitrogen atoms, which may further have substituent(s);

- B is an optionally substituted hydrocarbon group or an optionally substituted heterocyclic group;
- X is a divalent acyclic hydrocarbon group;
- Z is -O-, -S-, -NR²-, -CONR²- or -NR²CO- (R² is a hydrogen atom or an optionally substituted alkyl group);

Y and Y¹ are the same or different and each is a bond or a divalent acyclic hydrocarbon group; and

- D is a ring optionally further having substituent(s);
- is an optionally substituted acyl group or an optionally substituted heterocyclic group, provided that when the 5-membered aromatic heterocycle represented by ring A is imidazole, then Z should not be -O-,

and-provided that when the 5-membered aromatic heterocycle represented by ring A is pyrazole, X is methylene, Z is -S- and Y is a bond, then the ring represented by D should not be oxadiazole, and

provided that

5-(difluoromethyl)-3-{4-[3-(1-ethyl-1H-pyrazol-3-yl)propoxy]-3,5-dimethylphenyl}-1,2,4-oxadiazole, and N-[3-(5-{4-amino-2-[(3,4,5-trimethoxyphenyl)amino]-1,3-thiazol-5-yl}-1,2,4-oxadiazol-3-yl)-4-methylphenyl]-2-(1-methyl-1H-imidazol-4-yl)acetamide are excluded,

or a salt thereof.

- 10. (Original) The compound of claim 9, wherein the 5-membered aromatic heterocycle represented by ring A is a pyrazole, oxadiazole, thiadiazole, triazole or tetrazole ring.
- 11. (Original) The compound of claim 9, wherein the optionally substituted acyl group represented by R^3 is a group of the formula: $-SO_2R^4$, $-SOR^4$ or $-PO_3R^4R^5$ wherein R^4 and R^5 are the same or different and each is a hydrogen atom, a hydrocarbon group or a heterocyclic group, and R^4 and R^5 may form a heterocycle together with the adjacent oxo-substituted phosphorus atom and two oxygen atoms.
- 12. (Original) The compound of claim 9, wherein the 5-membered aromatic heterocycle represented by ring A is a pyrazole ring.
- 13. (Original) The compound of claim 9, wherein B is an optionally substituted aromatic hydrocarbon group or an optionally substituted aromatic heterocyclic group.
- 14. (Original) The compound of claim 9, wherein X is a divalent C_{1-8} aliphatic hydrocarbon group.
- 15. (Original) The compound of claim 9, wherein Z is -CONR²- (R^2 is a hydrogen atom or an optionally substituted alkyl group).
- 16. (Original) The compound of claim 9, wherein Y is a bond or a C_{1-4} alkylene.
- 17. (Original) The compound of claim 9, wherein Y^1 is a bond or a C_{1-4} alkylene.
- 18. (Original) The compound of claim 9, wherein the ring represented by D is a C_{6-14} aromatic hydrocarbon ring.

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The compound of claim 9, which is diethyl [4-({(2E)-3-[5-(4-
19. (Original)
fluorophenyl)-1-methyl-1H-pyrazol-4-yl]prop-2-enoyl}amino)benzyl]phosphonate;
(2E)-N-{4-[(2,4-dioxo-1,3-thiazolidin-5-yl)methyl]phenyl}-3-[5-(4-fluorophenyl)-1-methyl-1H-
pyrazol-4-yl]acrylamide;
(2E)-3-[5-(4-fluorophenyl)-1-methyl-1H-pyrazol-4-yl]-N-[4-(1H-imidazol-1-
ylmethyl)phenyl]acrylamide;
(2E)-3-[5-(4-fluorophenyl)-1-methyl-1H-pyrazol-4-yl]-N-[4-(1H-pyrazol-1-
ylmethyl)phenyl]acrylamide;
diethyl [4-({(2E)-3-[1-methyl-5-(2-thienyl)-1H-pyrazol-4-yl]prop-2-
enoyl}amino)benzyl]phosphonate;
(2E)-3-[5-(4-fluorophenyl)-1-methyl-1H-pyrazol-4-yl]-N-{4-[(3-methyl-2,4-dioxo-1,3-
thiazolidin-5-yl)methyl]phenyl}acrylamide;
(2E)-N-[4-(1H-benzimidazol-1-ylmethyl)phenyl]-3-[5-(4-fluorophenyl)-1-methyl-1H-pyrazol-4-
yl]acrylamide;
(2E)-3-[5-(4-fluorophenyl)-1-methyl-1H-pyrazol-4-yl]-N-{4-
[(methylsulfonyl)methyl]phenyl}acrylamide;
(2E)-3-[5-(4-fluorophenyl)-1-methyl-1H-pyrazol-4-yl]-N-{4-[hydroxy(2-
pyridinyl)methyl]phenyl}acrylamide;
(2E)-3-[5-(4-fluorophenyl)-1-methyl-1H-pyrazol-4-yl]-N-[4-(4-
morpholinylmethyl)phenyl]acrylamide; or
(2E)-N-{4-[(ethylsulfonyl)methyl]phenyl}-3-[5-(4-fluorophenyl)-1-methyl-1H-pyrazol-4-
yl]acrylamide.
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- **20.** (Original) A pharmaceutical agent comprising the compound of claim 9 or a prodrug thereof.
- **21.** (**Previously presented**) A method for preventing or treating neuropathy in a mammal, which comprises administering the compound of claim 9 to said mammal.
- **22.** (Previously presented) A method for promoting production or secretion of a neurotrophic factor in a mammal, which comprises administering the compound of claim 9 to said mammal.

- **23.** (**Previously presented**) A method for ameliorating pain in a mammal, which comprises administering the compound of claim 9 to said mammal.
- **24.** (Previously presented) A method for protecting a nerve in a mammal, which comprises administering the compound of claim 9 to said mammal.

25-30. (Cancelled)